

Town of Arlington
Town Meeting Procedures Committee
March 25, 2023

Call to order: The meeting of the Town Meeting Procedures Committee was called to order by Town Moderator Greg Christiana via online video conferencing on Saturday March 25, 2023, at 11:31am

Quorum: A quorum was present: Adam Auster, Greg Christiana, Rebecca Gruber, Christopher Moore, and John Worden. Also present were Rieko Tanaka, Mark Rosenthal, Zachary Grunko, and Guillermo Hamlin.

Public Comments:

- No public comments were offered.

Minutes of Prior Meetings:

March 2, 2023: Mr. Auster moved to accept the minutes of the March 2, 2023, Town Meeting Procedures Committee, with the following change:

In place of the phrase “cause to be included in the Special Town Meeting...” in the first paragraph on Page 2, substitute the phrase “ask the Select Board to include in the Special Town Meeting...”

Seconded: Mr. Moore
Vote: unanimous

March 13, 2023: Mr. Moore moved to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2023, meeting.
Seconded: Ms. Gruber
Vote: unanimous

Old Business:

Warrant Article for Hybrid Town Meeting Study Committee: Ms. Gruber presented a proposed warrant article to establish a study committee to look at conducting Town Meeting in a Hybrid format. After some changes to the text to clarify the expectation that the committee will likely report to Town Meeting multiple times as it continues its work, Mr. Worden moved to accept the proposal and submit it for inclusion on the Special Town Meeting warrant.

Second: Moore
Vote: unanimous

Proposed Motion for Hybrid Study Committee:

- The committee discussed a proposed motion to be made under the Hybrid Town Meeting Study Committee warrant article. Discussion included:
 - Membership and appointing authority/authorities
 - Possibility of adding a Town employee appointed by the Town Manager

- Whether or not Town employees should be voting members of the committee
- The need to add a statement encouraging diversity in the appointees
- How the committee will be dissolved
- The motion needs more work and will be revisited at a future meeting.

Consent Agenda:

The committee discussed the Consent Agenda and how articles might be selected for inclusion. Mr. Christiana shared a worksheet (available in the public Google Docs folder for the Committee) listing the articles on the warrant whose titles matched articles on last year's consent agenda (and whether they were removed from the consent agenda). Thirteen Articles in this year have titles that match last year's Consent Agenda and were not removed from last year's Consent Agenda. Discussion included widely varying suggestions for deciding which articles belong on the Consent Agenda including:

1. Only articles which are approved every year without discussion.
2. #1 plus articles withdrawn by the proponent and voted "No Action" by the reviewing board.
3. #1 plus all articles which have been voted "No Action" by the reviewing board.

Mr. Christiana invited members of the Committee to send (by email) their suggestions for specific articles that should be considered for the Consent Agenda.

Update on in-person TM procedures:

Mr. Christiana discussed arrangements for a two-space Town Meeting with ACMI and OTI (electronic handsets vendor). ACMI update: video will be manually switched between the sources (main space, satellite space, speaking queue, and voting). Audio will be live bi-directionally between the two spaces. The microphone in the satellite space will be muted unless the sound reaches a threshold. The deputy moderator in the satellite space will be near the microphone to relay points of order or other motions that are too quiet to reach the microphone's threshold. Mr. Moore and Ms. Gruber suggested that the deputy moderator in the satellite space should have their own microphone.

There will be a way for a user to add and remove themselves from the speaking queue using the electronic handsets with feedback on the device (e.g. "you are on the speaking queue") that will persist until the speaking queue is cleared. The system does have a different mode which would allow us to differentiate between types of requests to speak (e.g. "in favor", "against", "questions") which the Moderator may choose to use on a trial basis. Mr. Auster suggested that the key for requesting to speak should be a different key from the voting keys.

New Business:

None.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 1:18pm.

Moved: Ms. Gruber

Seconded: Mr. Moore

Christopher Moore